

19 September 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Chairman John Stennis, Senate Armed Services Committee, and Mr. T. Edward Braswell, Chief of Staff, Senate Armed Services Committee

25X1 1. Senator Stennis had asked for this meeting to discuss CIA programs [redacted] In addition, we discussed the Sino-Soviet conflict, Communist China, Nationalist China, the Green Beret case, certain items on Soviet arms development and other matters.

2. Senator Stennis was given a general briefing on Agency programs in Laos. It immediately became clear that his concern arose from the current Senate investigation of United States commitments in Thailand and Laos. Senator Stennis wanted to know if any American combat troops were used in Laos by CIA. We said there were no ground troops so involved but 25X1 American pilots flew American tactical aircraft in support of our operations. We noted that this tactical air was our artillery and without it the CIA-supported Laos government military program could not succeed. [redacted]

[redacted] He asked if any American ground troops were active in the CIA advisory program. We said this program was manned by CIA staff personnel and only an occasional military man was loaned to CIA for assignment in Laos. We pointed out that this was in contrast to our program in Vietnam where many of our activities are carried on by American military officers assigned to CIA. He again asked if any American military officers were engaged in direct combat in Laos and we said that the only other personnel we knew of were those officers from Special Forces who led raids into south Laos to interdict North Vietnamese supply lines through south Laos into South Vietnam. These teams consisted largely of Vietnamese troops under the command of American officers. We

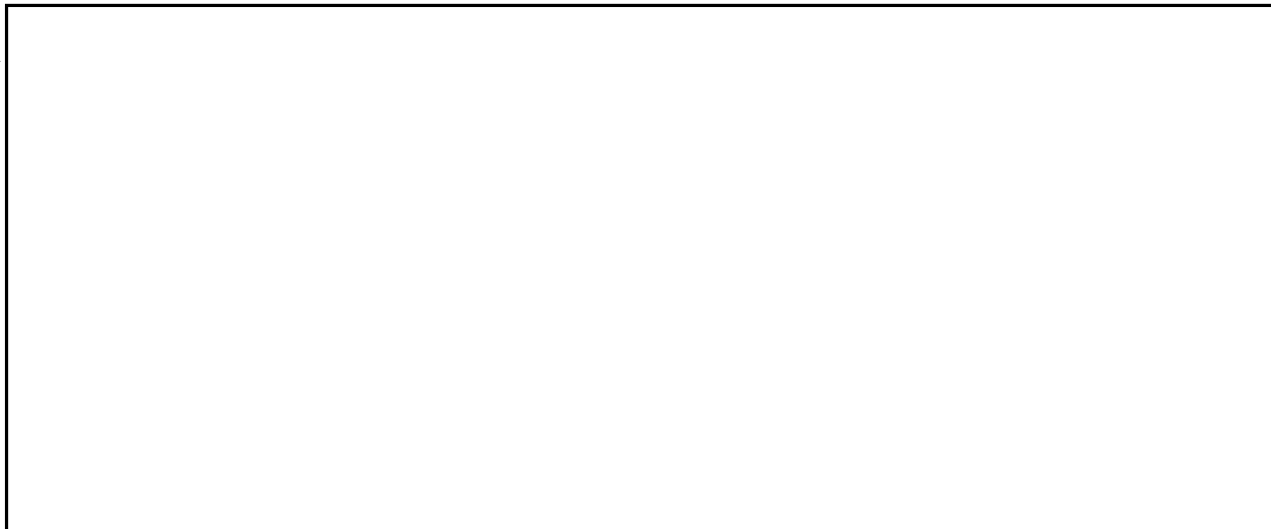
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pointed out that such operations are shallow penetrations of Laos, were secret in nature and did not really represent the use of American combat troops in Laos. Senator Stennis was given a run-down of our staff strength [REDACTED], the cost of our budget [REDACTED], the nature of our activity (road watch, paramilitary support to regular FAR units, support to the MEO irregulars and special activities such as truck and pipeline interdiction) and a review of our intelligence operations. Both Senator Stennis and Mr. Braswell asked a number of questions on these operations and appeared quite interested in the answers. Senator Stennis took notes.

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4. Senator Stennis wished to know what sort of operations we ran in Cambodia. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] We made it quite clear that we did not run paramilitary operations and political action operations in Cambodia. He asked if other military organizations ran paramilitary operations in Cambodia and we said that we are uninformed on this subject. He agreed to ask the Pentagon for this information.

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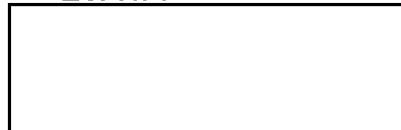
5. Senator Stennis asked us what guidance we had received from the White House for handling our testimony with the Symington Committee. Mr. Maury replied that we had not received any word as yet and Senator Stennis suggested that such guidance should be obtained in the near future.

6. Mr. Maury then discussed the development of new Soviet weaponry, etc., and the possibility of an early meeting of the Agency Subcommittee, which he is reporting in a separate memo.

7. This discussion led to questions on the Sino-Soviet dispute and Senator Stennis asked for a briefing on Communist China. He was given a general China briefing which lasted approximately twenty minutes and covered such matters as the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Chinese industrial progress, the political leadership and China's relations with North Vietnam and with the Soviet Union. He asked about North Vietnam leadership and we discussed a possible split in the Politburo between Le Duan and Troung Chinh as well as the argument among the North Vietnamese leadership on economic policy.

8. This led to a discussion of the current military situation in Laos and some speculation on the unexplained withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from the Plaine des Jarres. We informed Senator Stennis of the large caches of Vietnamese weapons recently captured by Laotian forces and suggested that these losses have hurt the Vietnamese logistical pipeline into North Central Laos.

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Acting Chief, Far East Division

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